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ABSTRACT

This report is concerned with the development of population education in Asian countries through the assistance of UNESCO. It includes guidelines and goals for a comprehensive population education program feasible for most Asian nations. Included in the program goals are the development and implementation of educational programs at all grade levels for the children, youth, and adults, both in and out of schools; the training of teaching personnel through the universities; and the alerting of leadership personnel to the limitations imposed by population growth on attaining these educational objectives. Stressed throughout the report is the importance of educating individuals with an intelligent understanding of population issues and with a responsible awareness of their implications for social and human resource development. (MA)

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REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT OF UNESCO'S MAJOR POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES IN EDUCATION SERVICES AFFECTING POPULATION CHANGES

Background Paper

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REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT OF UNESCO'S MAJOR POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES IN EDUCATION SERVICES AFFECTING POPULATION CHANGES

Unesco's interest in population activities and family planning dates back to November 1966 when the General Conference passed a resolution to the effect that a Committee of experts should look into the question of defining Unesco's responsibilities in the field of population. Specifically, the Committee was asked to advise on "carrying out sociological studies on social, cultural and other factors influencing attitudes for family planning, taking into consideration the economic aspects of population problems", and "functioning as a clearing house for exchange of sociological research and knowledge in the field of family planning." The Committee of experts which met at Paris from 6 to 12 July 1967 in pursuance of this resolution took a broad perspective of its terms of reference. It made two general recommendations. The first was to the effect that Unesco, recognising that other members of the United Nations family were also involved in the population field, should undertake only such collaborative activities as were truly distinctive to its own special character as an educational agency. The second was to the effect that Unesco should continue and expand its efforts to promote literacy, education, science and communication, all of which while being intrinsically valuable in themselves had the added advantage of contributing to human welfare through their impact on reproductive behaviour. Apart from these two general recommendations, the Committee made specific recommendations

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relating to the fields of Education, Mass Communication and Social Science. In the field of Education, the recommendations were as follows:

1. The extent to which and the processes by which education affected reproductive behaviour should be investigated;
2. The impact of demographic factors on the planning and development of education, in both quantitative and qualitative terms, should be studied;
3. Population materials should be introduced into curricula both at the elementary level and at the secondary level;
4. Population materials should be introduced in literacy and adult education programmes;
5. The study of demography at the university level should be encouraged.

The recommendations of this Committee undoubtedly provided the basis for the Director-General's statement, presented at the 77th meeting of the Executive Board held in November 1967, on the broad perspectives for Unesco's activities in the field of population during the next ten years. These perspectives consisted of:

1. a long-term programme of studies, including some cross-national analysis concerning the reciprocal relations between the development of education and the evolution of population;
2. the promotion of demography as an academic discipline;
3. the training of demographers at university level and the creation of opportunities for post-graduate demographic research;

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4. the dissemination in schools of knowledge about population data and problems;
5. the introduction of population materials into adult education programmes.

Within the scope of this statement which received its endorsement, the Executive Board passed a resolution, approving an outline of programme possibilities for the period 1969-72 in the Education, Mass Communication and Social Science sectors.

The General Conference, at its fifteenth session held in November 1968, considered the resolution passed by the Executive Board, along with a number of earlier recommendations and resolutions relating to the same subject. Among these were a resolution passed by the Conference at its fourteenth session, certain resolutions and recommendations of the General Assembly of the United Nations and the Economic and Social Council, and a resolution of the International Conference on Human Rights. Having considered these and also the ways in which they were related to the functioning of various units of the United Nations system, the General Conference approved a co-ordinated programme in the three fields of Unesco's competence, namely Education, Social Sciences and Communication. The specific activities listed in relation to the Education sector were

1. helping in the development of teaching materials, curricula, teacher training, adult education, women's education, community education, etc.;

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2. studying the possibilities of including an educational pilot project on family planning in the experimental literacy programme.

In pursuance of the mandate given to it in 1968, Unesco has undertaken, supported or encouraged a number of activities in the Asian region. In order to encourage the scientific study of population issues, and to provide the expertise for taking the leadership in developing administrative structures for the systematic collection and analysis of data bearing on population, the study of demography at the university level has been assisted by the provision of expert services, fellowships, and library and laboratory facilities. The major thrust of Unesco's educational programme is, however, on the introduction of materials relating to population into the curricula of educational institutions at all levels, and into programmes of education, including functional literacy programmes, for out-of-school youth and adults. Population Education, as this new area of study has now come to be called by general agreement, is of an inter-disciplinary nature, and draws its content from a number of subject areas such as demography, economics, sociology, anthropology, medicine, psychology and science. Its objective is to give the learner an insight into the totality of issues connected with population, ranging from the nature, measurement, causes, determinants and consequences of population growth as well as of urbanization both at the micro-level of the family and at the macro-level of the community, the nation, or the world at large to the dynamics of the reproductive process, and finally to the

possibilities of planning family size and population growth. Stimulus to the introduction of Population Education in the Asian region was provided by a regional workshop that was sponsored by Unesco in September 1970. The report of the workshop provides a definition of the field of Population Education and a statement of objectives, and discusses the strategies for introducing it into schools. Two sets of sample instructional materials, one in the field of science and mathematics, and the other in the field of social studies, have also been published, containing the work produced by workshop participants at group sessions. The immediate sequel to the regional workshop was the holding of national seminars in a number of countries, financed by Unesco or by other agencies such as the Colombo Plan and U.S. Aid. Through them, the ground has been cleared for the commencement of curriculum development activities, teacher training activities etc., for the introduction of Population Education materials into educational programmes.

A comprehensive programme of Population Education, to meet the needs of most of the countries of Asia, should consist of the following components:

A. Population Education in elementary and secondary schools;

B. Population Education in educational institutions other than elementary and secondary schools, and in training programmes for certain categories of personnel;

C. Population Education for out-of-school youth and adults.

The case for the inclusion of each of these components is briefly set out below:

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A. Population Education in elementary and secondary schools

Considering that

(i) nearly 50% of the population in most countries of Asia is under the age of 15, and that they constitute the adults and parents of tomorrow, whose reproductive behaviour has to be regulated with a responsible awareness of its implications for personal and national development;

(ii) responsible behaviour in regard to parenthood and population issues may conceivably require a cognitive and attitudinal base developed through the years of childhood and adolescence as the result of a continuing exposure to population issues;

(iii) informed opinion in many countries of the world has taken up the position that of measures that may be taken to restrain rapid population growth, an educational approach that emphasises the development of an intelligent understanding of population issues may be the most productive in its effects;

the need for the introduction of Population Education into the curriculum of elementary and secondary schools on a nation-wide scale should receive attention.

B. Population Education in educational institutions other than elementary and secondary schools, and in training programmes for certain categories of personnel

The operation of programmes of Population Education in elementary and secondary schools, as well as for out-of-school youth and adults, requires the deployment of a very large body of persons to function in instructional roles. Clearly, the largest number of such persons would be drawn from the teaching profession, and they

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have to be prepared for this work through programmes provided on an in-service basis, as well as through programmes introduced into the pre-service courses conducted for would-be teachers in university schools of education and in institutions of teacher education. Apart from them, there exists also the need to ensure that certain other categories of personnel who have to deal with people in one capacity or another require instruction in Population Education, not only as an element in their own education, but also to give them the enthusiasm and the capability to share their insights with the people they come in contact with in the course of their professional work. A few of these categories may be mentioned here: doctors, nurses, public health workers, agricultural extension workers, co-operative workers, community development workers, personnel associated with literacy programmes, instructional programmes in the armed forces etc. It is likely that some of these categories of personnel would also participate formally in an instructional role in providing Population Education for out-of-school youth and adults.

C. Population Education for out-of-school youth and adults

From the point of view of an immediate influence on reproductive behaviour, the target group that is most critical for a programme of Population Education consists of out-of-school youth and adults, who are on the threshold of, or in the midst of, their reproductive behaviour. While it must be recognised that they are a most elusive group to reach, it is essential that they should be reached, and a comprehensive programme of Population Education has to take account

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of them, not only now but in the future as well. Even after Population Education has been established in elementary and secondary schools, the problem of drop outs from schools would continue to be such that many, not reached through school programmes, would have to be reached through programmes for out-of-school youth and adults. Moreover, even in the case of those who have been reached through school programmes, it may be necessary to ensure a strengthening and reinforcement of their awareness of and insight into population issues in the years of adult life when personal decisions have to be taken about reproductive behaviour.

A number of Population Education Project proposals, prepared or processed with Unesco's assistance, have been received from countries of the Asian region for funding by the United Nations Fund for Population Activities. Typically, they provide for the following activities:

1. Identifying a Population Education Project staff and providing training for them through workshops, seminars, courses of study, study tours etc.;
2. Developing curriculum materials on an experimental basis, carrying out field trials with them, and revising them in the light of the feedback from field trials;
3. Preparing teachers through in-service and pre-service training programmes;
4. Introducing curriculum materials on a nation-wide basis as and when materials have been finalised and teachers trained;
5. Conducting a continuing programme of research and evaluation to gather data for the improvement of the curriculum materials, teacher training strategy etc.

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It will be noted that the projects envisaged by and large belong to component A. Component B enters into them only in the sense that the training of teachers to supply the needs of the school programme has been taken account of, while component C does not enter the picture at all. One reason for the ready selection of component A for Population Education activities is that the target population is easily identifiable and available, and that the infra-structure in the form of buildings, institutions and personnel for carrying out programmes already exists. Sight should not be lost, however, of the fact that the target groups most critical for an immediate influence on reproductive behaviour belong to components B and C, and that while programme formulation and implementation are exceedingly complex tasks in respect of them, they are well worth attempting. Unesco advice and UNFPA assistance will certainly be available to countries which are prepared to face up to these tasks. At the regional level, Unesco's capability for rendering advice in connection with programme development has been strengthened by the appointment of a Regional Adviser on Population Education and the establishment of a Documentation Centre for Population Education. Population Education Advisers are also being appointed to countries which request them, and while their principal function is to advise in relation to the projects that are being funded for the school level, their advice would no doubt be available for preparing project proposals under components B and C. It will also be of interest to note that Unesco, recognising that the inter-disciplinary nature of Population Education offers special problems in the

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preparation of curriculum materials, has taken steps to engage a group of consultants to compile a source book.

Mention should also be made here of an important activity scheduled for the coming year. As a joint Unesco/IIEP undertaking, it is proposed to hold, about the middle of the year 1973, a workshop that would bring together a selected number of Asian government officials from various Ministries at the level of decision preparation involved in the development and implementation of educational programmes in order to discuss:

(a) the population base of school programmes;

(b) the constraints imposed by population dynamics on the attainment of educational objectives;

(c) the need for population studies as an essential instrument for designing educational programmes for the future.

In summary, it may be said that Unesco's activities in the field of education with special reference to population issues have two foci, both basic to issues of social development and human resource development:

(i) educating the child, youth and adult population about the impact of population growth and family size upon the welfare of the individual, the family and the nation;

(ii) alerting persons in positions of leadership to the constraints imposed by population growth on the attainment of educational objectives.